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The word "Lucifer" in Isaiah 14:12 presents a minor problem to mainstream Christianity. It becomes a much larger problem to Bible literalists, and becomes a huge obstacle for the claims of Mormonism. [John J. Robinson](#) in [A Pilgrim's Path](#), pp. 47-48 explains:

"Lucifer makes his appearance in the fourteenth chapter of the Old Testament book of Isaiah, at the twelfth verse, and nowhere else: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"

The first problem is that Lucifer is a [Latin](#) name. So how did it find its way into a Hebrew manuscript, written before there was a Roman language? To find the answer, I consulted a scholar at the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. What Hebrew name, I asked, was Satan given in this chapter of Isaiah, which describes the angel who fell to become the ruler of hell? Please, I asked, explain this to me in a manner that I can understand and then explain to anyone, not just folks who have completed a degree either traditionally or through an [online university](#).

The answer was a surprise. I had to sit back into a chair and take a moment before continuing. In the original Hebrew text, the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah is not about a fallen angel, but about a fallen Babylonian king, who during his lifetime had persecuted the children of Israel. It contains no mention of Satan, either by name or reference. The Hebrew [scholar](#) could only speculate that some early Christian scribes, writing in the Latin tongue used by the Church, had decided for themselves that they wanted the story to be about a fallen angel, a creature not even mentioned in the original Hebrew text, and to whom they gave the name "Lucifer."

Why Lucifer? In Roman [astronomy](#), Lucifer was the name given to the morning star (the star we now know by another Roman name, Venus). The morning star appears in the heavens just before dawn, heralding the rising sun. The name derives from the Latin term lucem ferre, bringer, or bearer, of light." In the Hebrew text the expression used to describe the Babylonian king before his death is Helal, son of Shahar, which can best be translated as "Day star, son of the Dawn." The name evokes the golden glitter of a proud king's dress and court (much as his personal splendor earned for King Louis XIV of France the appellation, "The Sun King").

The scholars authorized by ... King James I to translate the Bible into current English did not use the original Hebrew texts, but used versions translated ... largely by St. Jerome in the fourth century. Jerome had mistranslated the Hebraic metaphor, "Day star, son of the Dawn," as "Lucifer," and over the centuries a metamorphosis took place. Lucifer the morning star became a disobedient angel, cast out of heaven to rule eternally in hell. Theologians, writers, and poets interwove the myth with the doctrine of the Fall, and in Christian tradition Lucifer is now the same as Satan, the Devil, and --- ironically --- the Prince of Darkness.

So "Lucifer" is nothing more than an ancient Latin name for the morning star, the bringer of light. That can be confusing for Christians who identify Christ himself as the morning star, a term used as a central theme in many Christian sermons. Jesus refers to himself as the morning star in Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

And so there are those who do not read beyond the King James version of the Bible, who say 'Lucifer is Satan: so says the Word of God'...."

Henry Neufeld (a Christian who comments on Biblical sticky issues) went on to say,

"this passage is often related to Satan, and a similar thought is expressed in Luke 10:18 by Jesus, that was not its first meaning. Its primary meaning is given in Isaiah 14:4 which says that when Israel is restored they will "take up this taunt against the king of Babylon . . ." Verse 12 is a part of this taunt song. This passage refers first to the fall of that earthly king..."

How does the confusion in translating this verse arise? The Hebrew of this passage reads: "heleyl, ben shachar" which can be literally translated "shining one, son of dawn." This phrase means, again

literally, the planet Venus when it appears as a morning star. In the Septuagint, a 3rd century BC translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, it is translated as "heosphoros" which also means Venus as a morning star.

How did the translation "lucifer" arise? This word comes from Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Was Jerome in error? Not at all. In Latin at the time, "lucifer" actually meant Venus as a morning star. Isaiah is using this metaphor for a bright light, though not the greatest light to illustrate the apparent power of the Babylonian king which then faded."

Therefore, Lucifer wasn't equated with Satan until after Jerome. Jerome wasn't in error. Later Christians (and Mormons) were in equating "Lucifer" with "Satan".

So why is this a problem to Christians? Christians now generally believe that Satan (or the Devil or Lucifer who they equate with Satan) is a being who has always existed (or who was created at or near the "beginning"). Therefore, they also think that the 'prophets' of the Old Testament believed in this creature. The Isaiah scripture is used as proof (and has been used as such for hundreds of years now). [As Elaine Pagels explains](#) though, the concept of Satan has evolved over the years and the early Bible writers didn't believe in or teach such a doctrine.

The irony for those who believe that "Lucifer" refers to Satan is that the same title ('morning star' or 'light-bearer') is used to refer to Jesus, in 2 Peter 1:19, where the Greek text has exactly the same term: 'phosphoros' 'light-bearer.' This is also the term used for Jesus in Revelation 22:16.

So why is Lucifer a far bigger problem to Mormons? Mormons claim that an ancient record (the [Book of Mormon](#)) was written beginning in about 600 BC, and the author in 600 BC supposedly copied Isaiah in Isaiah's original words. When Joseph Smith pretended to translate the supposed 'ancient record', he included the Lucifer verse in the Book of Mormon. Obviously he wasn't copying what Isaiah actually wrote. [He was copying the King James Version of the Bible](#). Another book of LDS scripture, the Doctrine & Covenants, furthers this problem in [76:26](#) when it affirms the false Christian doctrine that "Lucifer" means Satan. This incorrect doctrine also spread into a third set of Mormon scriptures, the *Pearl of Great Price*, which [describes a war in heaven](#) based, in part, on Joseph Smith's incorrect interpretation of the word "Lucifer" which only appears in Isaiah.

The author of [The Polytheism Of The Bible And The Mystery Of Lucifer](#), F.T. DeAngelis, comments on this page as follows

"It seems minor, but - the actual term used in the Greek Septuagint version of Isaiah 14:12 (given that there is no ONE way of accurately transliterating) is Eo(u)s phoros, morning star/DAWN god of light. Eos or Eous phoros [not Heos (as your website claims) or phos phorus (as a Christian website I visited shows)] - although there is a Greek term and English... phosphoro(u)s. Your [site] is pretty accurate.

The actual name, "Lucifer," goes back to the Greeks, before the Romans. Socrates and Plato talk about this "god of light"; surprisingly, not in the context of Eos (god of Dawn), but -- as a morning star -- juxtaposed with the sun (Helios) and Hermes. This information can be found in Plato's [Timaeus](#) (38e) and in Edith Hamilton's [Mythology](#).

On a lighter note, Arthur Clarke, in his fictional book [2061 correctly](#) uses the word "Lucifer". He uses it as a name for a new sun in the solar system which is correct since the new sun is a second 'morning star' of 'original' 'light-bearing' substance--not some evil being of religious mythology.

David Grinspoon comments on the historical aspects of the word as follows: "The origin of the Judeo-Christian Devil as an angel fallen from heaven into the depths of hell is mirrored in the descent of Venus from shining morning star to the darkness below. This underworld demon, still feared today by people in many parts of the world, is also called Lucifer, which was originally a Latin name for Venus as a morning star." ([Venus Revealed](#) p. 17) Actually, Grinspoon should just refer to the "Christian Devil" since the Jews never believed in such a creature and still don't to this day.